

Memorial Service Planning Guide



MISSION HILLS CHURCH

In Ecclesiastes 3:2, the Bible tells us that there is “a time to be born and a time to die.” Even knowing that death is part of God’s plan can’t really prepare us for the onslaught of emotions we encounter with the loss of someone we love. Planning a service that will honor your loved one and celebrate their life can be a bit daunting in the midst of your grief. Mission Hills is honored to walk alongside you in this process. This booklet was created to assist in the planning of a service.

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PLANNING THE SERVICE

The family will usually meet with the pastor to decide on elements to include and an order of service. It is our desire to make this experience as smooth as possible for you; below are things to consider as you begin to plan.

SCRIPTURE

Scripture is an important element of the service; think about Bible verses you would like to include in the service. Sometimes it's helpful to look at your loved one's Bible to see if they had favorite verses highlighted or marked in some way. The following are just a few suggestions.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

John 14:1-4

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:37-39

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.

Psalms 27:4-5

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Psalms 4:8

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NLT)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.
2 Corinthians 1:3-5

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.
2 Corinthians 5:1

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
Psalm 34:18

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
Psalm 46:1-3

Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
Psalm 73:25-27

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.
Isaiah 57:1-2

SPEAKERS

Personal sharing can be an important part of the service. Think about if you want people to share or who might want to speak. Every service is different and there is not one way of doing things. Speakers should plan to share for approximately two to three minutes and should have notes to refer to at the service. If no one feels like sharing, you can write out your remembrances or thoughts and the pastor can read it for you.

MUSIC

Music can be a balm for the soul. Consider including music that was special to your loved one or is meaningful for your family. Mission Hills has a large library of songs that can be downloaded if we have **a song title and artist**. We suggest including two to three songs but are always flexible on this.

LIVE MUSIC

Musicians and accompanists are often difficult to find on short notice, but you are welcome to have friends or family take part in the service in this way.

SLIDE SHOW | VIDEO

Pictures tell a story. Sharing your loved one's story in the form of a slide show is a great way share a glimpse into who they were. Choosing images can become an important healing process. Here are helpful tips:

- Include approximately 50 photos
- Select several songs to include as background music (depending on the number of photos included)
- Put the slide show on a thumb drive and bring it to the church the day before the service to ensure everything is set up on our equipment and ready to go. We are also able to accept Dropbox links.
- Please use an MOV or Mp4 format.
- Contact Aaron Miller our technical director at amiller@missionhills.org with any questions or concerns.

MEMORIAL PROGRAM

We are available to create a memorial/funeral program for family and guests. Some things that might be included:

- A photo with a birth and death date
- An order of service, identifying service participants
- Bible verses, poems, song lyrics
- A biography
- Additional photographs
- A list of those left behind
- Anything that would be meaningful for you

VIDEO

The service will be videotaped. You can download the video once editing is completed by the technical team. This video can be shared freely with family and friends.

FUNERAL

If you are having a casket present for the service, please provide us with the name of the mortuary to enable us to coordinate the arrival of the casket to the church the day of the service.

GUEST BOOKS

We do NOT provide guest book, but ordinarily your mortuary can provide one. You can check at Target, Walmart or online (Amazon etc). Some people choose not to do a guest book, and that is perfectly fine as well.

MEMORABILIA TABLE

We can provide one or two long tables outside The Grove or Worship Center for you to display photos or personal items that will give people a glimpse into the life of your loved one. Examples might include: family keepsakes, trophies or awards, photos from travel, favorite sports teams, career accomplishments, hobbies, etc.

MEMORY CARDS

Providing a memory card is a great way for guests to share a personal memory and creates a lasting memory that your family can look back on in the days to come.

RECEPTION

If you choose to have a reception at the church, we will provide a light snack of meat and cheese trays, vegetables, fruit, chips, cookies, coffee and water for up to 300 people. If you have over 300, we can discuss catering and the church would provide up to \$150 toward that service. A reception is a great way to connect with those who have come to support you during this time. Receptions should last no longer than 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

DAY OF SERVICE

On the day of the service, plan to be at the church about an hour before the service begins so we can set up the memory table and family/friends will have time to gather and get settled before guests arrive. There will be a room assigned for you to meet in. Programs will be ready and on the table before the service.

About 15 minutes before the service, the pastor will meet with the family to go over the service order, pray with you and answer any questions. You will be led into the service by the pastor and seated in reserved seats.